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SHOSHONE

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

SUMMARY REPORT

U.S. Department of the Interior – Bureau of Land Management
Shoshone District – Idaho

February 1980

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
Shoshone Planning Area
Shoshone District

ABSTRACT

The actions included in this Rangeland Management Program will modify livestock grazing on approximately 574,000 acres of public land in the Shoshone District in south central Idaho. The actions are designed to meet the objectives identified in the land use plan; they also incorporate the findings of the Shoshone Grazing Environmental Statement (ES) and the expressed concerns of the public and other agencies. No single action or alternative in the ES was responsive to all these factors, so a combination of several alternatives was selected for this Rangeland Management Program.

The Rangeland Management Program would limit grazing use to 41,600 animal unit months (AUMs). This level of use represents a 29 percent downward adjustement from 1972–1976 average authorized use (58,731 AUMs), and a 50 percent downward adjustment from present active Federal grazing qualifications (83,120 AUMs). The method used for allocating forage will reserve 40 percent of the palatable vegetation and all of the unpalatable vegetation for watershed protection and wildlife habitat.

Rest-rotation grazing systems will be implemented on 22 allotments, deferred-rotation on 10 allotments, and seasonal grazing on 10 allotments. Several allotment boundaries will be adjusted to facilitate better resource management.

Range improvements scheduled during the next five-year period include 174 miles of fencing, 18 cattleguards, 20 miles of stock trails, 40 miles of pipelines, 47 spring developments, 83 reservoirs, and 77,045 acres of brush control and/or seeding. The total cost of range improvements is estimated to be $1,915,900.

Studies and evaluations will be conducted following implementation of grazing systems and range improvements to determine if objectives are being met. Environmental assessments will be prepared prior to modifying the grazing management program described in this document.

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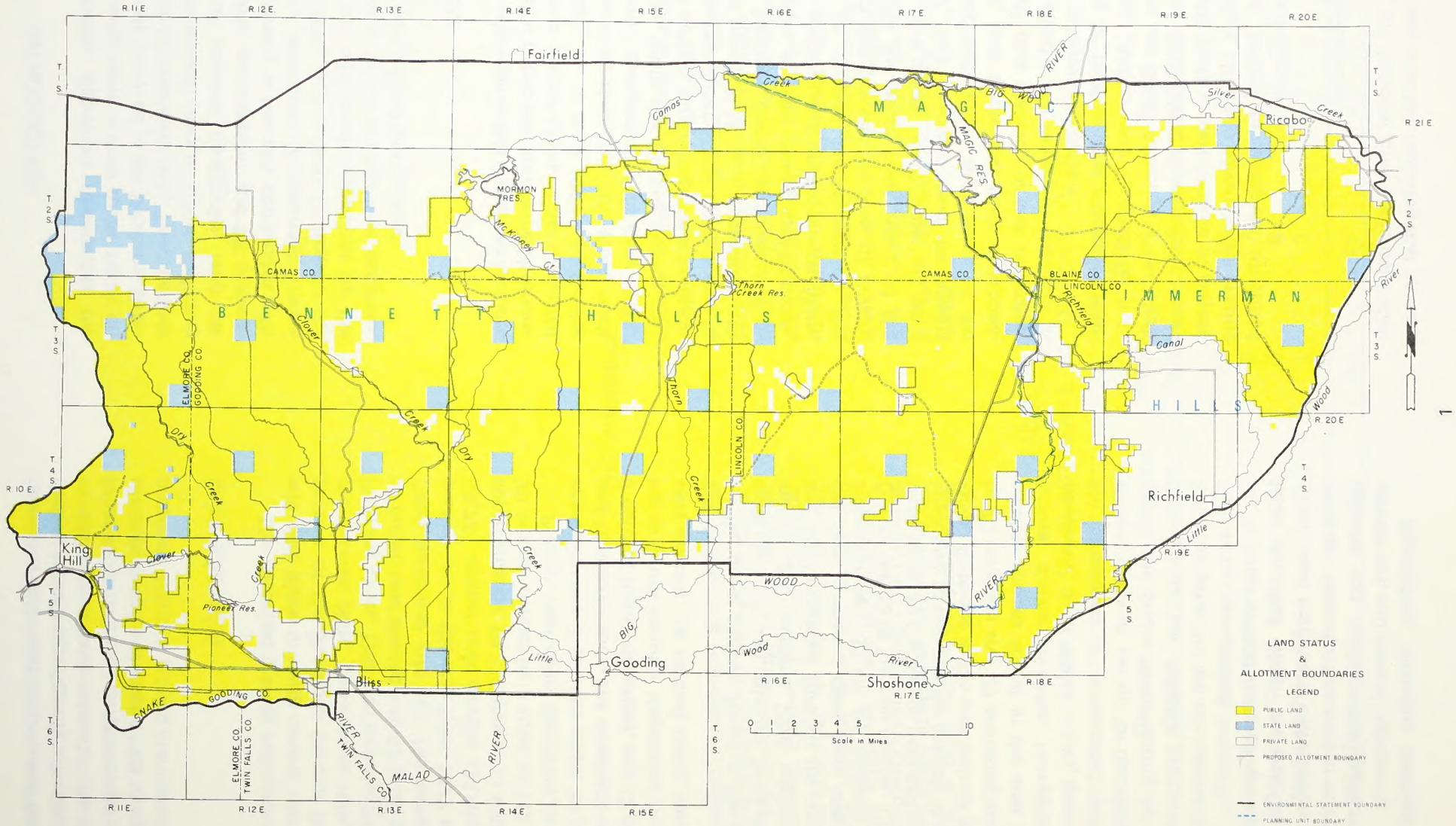

LAND STATUS
&
ALLOTMENT BOUNDARIES

LEGEND

- PUBLIC LAND
- STATE LAND
- PRIVATE LAND
- PROPOSED ALLOTMENT BOUNDARY
- ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT BOUNDARY
- PLANNING UNIT BOUNDARY

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INTRODUCTION

This planning document summarizes the rangeland management actions to be taken on the public lands analyzed in the Shoshone Grazing Environmental Statement (ES). These actions will culminate several years of effort, including completion of resource inventories, land use planning, public participation and ES preparation. This summary is basically compatible with the previously developed Management Framework Plan (MFP), and reflects findings in the Grazing ES and additional suggestions by the public and users. Where changes have occurred, the MFP will be modified and updated.

Grazing History

The area addressed in this document includes 574,000 acres of public land within the Shoshone District in south central Idaho. It has supported livestock grazing for at least 100 years. Similar to many other areas throughout the West, much of it was severely overgrazed by the early 1900s.

During the 1940s the Grazing Service conducted range surveys throughout the area, documenting advanced erosion and overgrazing. In the following years, BLM, in cooperation with the District Advisory Board, established allotment boundaries, adjusted grazing qualifications, and initiated various range improvements. Many areas began to respond immediately to the changes from the previous decades of uncontrolled use. On the other hand, many of the adjustments were either not imposed or were compromised, and proposed land treatments often did not materialize. Also, some of the accomplished land treatments were unsuccessful because of poor planning or lack of protection. Consequently, the rangeland resources in certain areas continued to decline.

Beginning in 1965, several Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) were designed for individual grazing use areas. Although a few allotments showed subsequent improvement, many AMPs met with little success because of continued overstocking, failure to adhere to the grazing systems, and failure to complete identified rehabilitation measures.

Grazing ES Background

In 1970, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was enacted, requiring that an environmental statement be prepared for all "major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment." Because of the broad scope of BLM's range management responsibilities, a "programmatic" ES was prepared on proposed livestock grazing management.

Existing Situation

The described grazing management program will take place in south central Idaho, within a portion of the Shoshone District that includes the Bennett Hills, Timmerman Hills, and Magic Planning Units. This area includes 574,000 acres of public land divided into 53 grazing allotments (later combined into 42). The average livestock grazing use in the area from 1972 to 1976 was 58,731 animal unit months (AUMs), including approximately 10,220 sheep, 13,430 cattle, and 30 horses, owned by a total of 112 permittees.

Present vegetation condition in the area is approximately 7 percent good, 33 percent fair, and 42 percent poor. The remaining area includes 6 percent highly disturbed, and 12 percent seeding or brush control. Vegetation trend is 2 percent upward, 76 percent static, and 22 percent downward.

Big game animals found in the area include mule deer, elk, and antelope. Mule deer numbers include 360 residents, 2260 wintering animals, and 1850 migrating through the area. Four crucial deer wintering areas have been identified. Approximately 80 elk are residents in the area. During the 1979 hunting season, 12 elk permits were issued to discourage depradation on private lands and to disperse the animals to other public lands. Antelope in the area include approximately 70 residents and 20 wintering animals. Other wildlife species found in the area include sage grouse, chukar partridge, Hungarian partridge, pheasants, quail, doves, ducks, geese, and swans. No threatened or endangered wildlife species inhabit the area, except for occasional wintering use in the Snake River vicinity by bald eagles. Several important fisheries exist within the area, but they generally are not substantially affected by grazing management.

A total of 300 cultural resource sites have been identified within the area; 38 of these on public land may merit inclusion on the National Register. Important recreation activities include hunting and fishing, rock collecting, off-road vehicle use, and general sightseeing.

Agriculture, including livestock grazing, is

the most important component of the local economy. Although the forage provided on public land represents only a small portion of total livestock forage requirements, the public lands serve a critical need in many individual livestock operations.

THE PROGRAM

What It Is

The rangeland management actions outlined here reflect the integration of six areas of consideration: (1) the environmental impact analysis, (2) socio-economic impacts, (3) resource needs, (4) objectives identified in the land use plan, (5) comments received from the public, and (6) additional input from the livestock users.

Rather than entirely implement the Proposed Action or any single alternative analyzed in the Shoshone ES, a combination of options was selected from the Proposed Action and Alternatives 1, 4, and 5. As shown in Table 1, the majority of the selections are based on the Proposed Action, with the addition of increased range improvements from Alternative 4. All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been adopted. Considering all facets of the environment, including both natural resource and socio-economic factors, the selected actions are considered to represent the environmentally preferable alternative.

(continued on page 6)

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF ALLOTMENTS, BY DECISION OPTION

Decision Option	Initial Stocking Rate	Grazing System	Season of Use	Range Improvements
Proposed Action	32	29	28	15
No Change Alternative	5	6	7	2
Maximum Rehab. Alt.	4	6	6	24
Modified Proposal	1	1	1	1
All Allotments	42	42	42	42

TABLE 2

STOCKING RATE, GRAZING SYSTEM, AND SEASON OF USE BY ALLOTMENT 1/

GRAZING SYSTEM AND ALLOTMENT NAME	PUBLIC LAND (Acres)	EXISTING PREFERENCE (AUMs)	AVERAGE USE (AUMs)	RANGELAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM DECISIONS				
				STOCKING (AUMs)	PERIOD(s) OF USE (Dates)	OPTIONS SELECTED 2/ STOCKING	SYSTEM	SEASON
REST ROTATION								
Black Canyon 3/	50,555	5287	4354	3254	4/16-8/31	MR	MR	MR
Canal	511	68	68	47	5/1-9/30	PA	PA	PA
Clover Creek	42,435	6044	3828	1975	8/1-10/15	PA	PA	PA
Compound	457	83	83	60	5/15-7/15	PA	PA	PA
Curtis Lake 4/	2,292	438	426	193	5/1-6/15	PA	PA	NC
Davis Mountain	39,030	5215	3371	4063	4/20-7/22; 9/25-12/30	PA	PA	PA
Dempsey	20,014	3768	2617	1331	5/1-6/30 ; 10/16-12/15	MR	PA	PA
Hill City Branch	687	90	89	51	5/1-9/30	PA	PA	PA
Indian	35,348	6190	4836	3040	4/1-6/10 ; 11/1-12/31	PA	PA	PA
Kime	600	138	100	46	5/1-9/30	PA	PA	PA
King Hill	25,368	4035	3003	1149	4/1-6/4 ; 10/16-12/15	MP	MP	MP
Kinzie Butte	8,684	1612	1326	676	4/16-8/15; 10/16-12/15	PA	PA	PA
Lava	28,000	3086	2499	1002	4/16-9/30	MR	NC	NC
Macon Flat	38,982	8413	4679	2155	5/1-6/15 ; 10/16-11/30	PA	PA	PA
North Gooding 3/	41,405	3750	2344	3750	4/16-6/15; 10/16-12/15	PA	PA	PA
North Shoshone 3/	91,336	16985	11487	7136	4/16-9/30; 10/16-12/15	PA	PA	PA
Picabo 5/	11,518	[illegible] 1579	[illegible] 1207	[illegible] 1207	4/16-6/30	NC	NC	NC
Pioneer	6,762	1830	2121	530	4/16-8/15	PA	PA	PA
Rattlesnake 3/	20,281	2722	2065	857	5/5-8/10	PA	MR	MR
Richfield Cattle	22,015	1959	2293	2346	4/16-10/5	PA	PA	PA
Ticeska	3,891	858	826	324	5/1-7/15	MR	MR	PA
Track	1,974	295	308	295	5/1-8/15	NC	PA	PA
SUBTOTAL REST ROTATION	492,145	74,151	53,696	35,253	---	--	--	--
DEFERRED ROTATION								
Black Buttes	49	7	7	4	5/1-5/31 ; 7/20-8/19	PA	MR	MR
"46"	208	25	25	14	5/1-6/10 ; 7/21-8/30	PA	MR	MR
Fricke	87	15	17	7	4/16-6/15; 7/15-9/14	PA	MR	MR
Hash Spring	5,746	400	400	400	5/25-10/31	PA	PA	PA
Lower Magic	263	26	73	52	5/1-10/1	PA	PA	PA
Magic	6,052	1316	1118	1118	4/25-8/24	NC	PA	PA
Spud Patch 6/	3,894	378	330	305	4/16-6/30	PA	PA	NC
Struthers	2,392	253	263	166	5/1-6/15 ; 10/16-12/31	PA	PA	PA
The Pasture	918	206	93	72	4/16-6/15; 10/16-12/15	PA	PA	PA
Tikura 7/	3,643	393	215	215	5/1-8/31	NC	NC	NC
SUBTOTAL DEFERRED ROTATION	23,252	3,019	2,541	2,353	---	--	--	--
SEASONAL GRAZING								
Cove Creek	54	12	10	4	8/1-8/15	PA	PA	PA
Gwin Ranch	487	28	27	62	7/1-8/30	PA	NC	MR
North Slope	661	122	122	98	6/10-11/30	PA	PA	PA
"101"	4,138	584	579	305	11/1-4/15	PA	PA	PA
Poison Creek	269	26	10	42	5/1-11/30	PA	PA	PA
Schooler Creek	58	0	17	20	7/21-11/9	PA	PA	PA
Spring Creek 8/	563	0	0	90	5/15-10/15	PA	PA	PA
Springdale	310	23	23	39	5/1-7/23	PA	PA	PA
Swinging Bridge	2,939	340	166	340	4/16-6/15; 10/10-12/15	NC	NC	NC
Timmerman Hills 9/	43,402	4815	1540	2994	4/16-6/15; 10/16-12/15	PA	NC	NC
SUBTOTAL SEASONAL GRAZING	52,881	5,950	2,494	3,994	---	--	--	--
TOTAL, ALLOTMENTS	568,278	83,120	58,731	41,600	---	--	--	--
UNALLOTTED AREAS	5,870	---	---	---	---	--	--	--
TOTAL, ALL PUBLIC LAND	574,148	83,120	58,731	41,600	---	--	--	--

1/ Range improvements are shown in Table 3.

2/ The option indicates the alternative selected: PA- Proposed Action, NC-No Change, MR-Maximum Rehabilitation, MP-Modified Proposal.

3/ Most of the allotment will have a rest-rotation grazing system, but part of the allotment will have a deferred rotation and/or a seasonal grazing system.

4/ The Curtis Lake Allotment was separated from the North Shoshone Allotment.

5/ A Wildlife Habitat Management/Allotment Management Plan is scheduled for completion for Picabo Allotment in Fiscal Year 1980.

6/ A cooperative SCS/BLM ranch/allotment plan is scheduled to be completed in 1980, which may require modification of the decision.

7/ The Tikura Allotment and Silver Creek Allotment (separate planning unit) will be combined and analyzed in the Sun Valley ES, scheduled for 1981.

8/ Based on careful consultation with the two involved range users, the Spring Creek Allotment will be divided into two separate use areas.

9/ After careful consultation with all affected range users, the conversion from sheep to cattle, as analyzed in the ES, will not be allowed. Consequently, the Timmerman Hills Allotment will not be divided into Timmerman West and Timmerman East.

TABLE 3

RANGE IMPROVEMENTS AND VEGETATIVE MANIPULATION

GRAZING SYSTEM AND ALLOTMENT NAME	OPTION FOR IMPROVE-MENTS 1/	FENCES (Miles)	CATTLE-GUARDS (Number)	STOCK TRAILS (Miles)	WATER DEVELOPMENTS PIPELINES (Miles)	WATER DEVELOPMENTS SPRINGS	WATER DEVELOPMENTS RESER-VOIRS	VEGETATION MANIPULATION Treatment Method	VEGETATION MANIPULATION Acres	TOTAL COST ($)
REST ROTATION										
Black Canyon	MR	---	---	---	3.8	5	4	Control Brush & Seed	7,500	$179,275
Canal	MR	---	---	---	---	---	---	Control Brush	100	2,735
								Control Brush & Seed	262	
Clover Creek	MR	11.0	3	---	---	---	6	Control Brush & Seed	2,500	88,661
Compound	PA	.5	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	900
Curtis Lake	NC	---	---	---	---	---	2	Control Brush	500	5,750
Davis Mountain	MR	10.0	---	---	---	11	4	Control Brush	2,500	146,174
								Control Brush & Seed	2,736	
Dempsey	MR	8.4	---	---	---	---	2	Control Brush	925	62,402
								Control Brush & Seed	2,410	
Hill City Branch	MR	.8	1	---	---	---	---	Control Brush	240	4,900
								Control Brush & Seed	40	
Indian	MR	12.3	2	---	---	---	---	Control Brush	1,350	126,510
								Control Brush & Seed	4,815	
Kime	MR	---	---	---	.3	---	---	Control Brush	280	2,635
King Hill	MP	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
Kinzie Butte	MR	16.0	3	---	---	---	6	Control Brush	1,055	90,466
								Control Brush & Seed	2,257	
Lava	MR	5.0	---	5.0	1.0	---	---	Control Brush	3,000	46,350
								Control Brush & Seed	3,000	
Macon Flat	MR	---	---	---	---	3	15	Control Brush	3,000	186,900
								Control Brush & Seed	4,000	
North Gooding	PA	---	---	15.0	---	5	13	Control Weeds	200	80,500
North Shoshone	MR	46.8	8	---	24.4	5	14	Control Brush	8,800	374,775
								Control Brush & Seed	6,200	
Picabo	MR	4.0	---	---	3.0	2	---	Control Brush	1,760	59,900
								Control Brush & Seed	1,000	
Pioneer	MR	1.7	1	---	---	---	---	Control Brush & Seed	1,090	28,210
Rattlesnake	MR	11.0	---	---	1.0	2	---	Control Brush & Seed	4,000	107,525
Richfield Cattle	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
Ticeska	MR	2.0	---	---	---	---	---	Control Brush & Seed	1,015	23,494
Track	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
DEFERRED ROTATION										
Black Buttes	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
"46"	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
Fricke	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
Hash Spring	MR	4.0	---	---	---	11	7	Control Brush	40	37,300
Lower Magic	PA	.8	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1,300
Magic	MR	1.5	---	---	5.0	---	---	Control Brush	300	48,160
Spud Patch	MR	1.5	---	---	---	2	1	Control Brush	1400	24,750
Struthers	MR	---	---	---	---	---	4	Control Brush	100	15,650
								Control Brush & Seed	500	
The Pasture	MR	.3	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	4,856
Tikura	NC	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
SEASONAL GRAZING										
Cove Creek	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
Gwin Ranch	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
North Slope	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
"101"	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
Poison Creek	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
Schooler Creek	MR	1.3	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1,800
Spring Creek	PA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	000
Springdale	PA	1.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1,800
Swinging Bridge	MR	2.5	---	---	---	1	---	Control Brush	270	4,600
Timmerman Hills	MR	---	---	---	1.0	---	5	Control Brush	7,900	104,300
TOTAL ALLOTMENTS	---	142.4	18	20.0	39.5	47	83	---	77,045	1,862,578
UNALLOTTED AREAS	---	31.5	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	53,320
TOTAL, ALL PUBLIC LANDS	---	173.9	18	20.0	39.5	47	83	---	77,045	$1,915,898

1/ The option indicates the alternative selected as the basis for the listed range improvements. PA-Proposed Action, NC-No Change, MR-Maximum Rehabilitation, MP-Modified Proposal.

Livestock Grazing Management

The total amount of authorized livestock grazing will be 41,600 AUMs, which represents an overall 29 percent reduction from past average use and a 50 percent reduction from present Federal grazing qualifications (active preference). Grazing systems to be implemented will include rest rotation on 22 allotments totaling 488,377 acres of public land, deferred rotation on 10 allotments with 23,252 acres, and seasonal grazing on 10 allotments totaling 52,881 acres. Table 2 lists allotments by grazing system and shows acreages, existing and future stocking rates, and seasons of use for each allotment. Also, the option (Proposed Action or alternative in the Shoshone ES) selected as the basis for future management of each allotment is given for the stocking rates, grazing systems, and seasons of use.

Range improvements to be implemented are listed in Table 3. They include 18 cattleguards, approximately 174 miles of fence, 47 spring developments, approximately 40 miles of water pipelines with troughs, 83 reservoirs, 20 miles of stock trails, and 77,045 acres of land treatments. All land treatment areas will be rested from grazing for at least the first two entire growing seasons following completion.

Wildlife Habitat

The grazing management outlined above has been designed to:

1. Provide a total of 5,033 AUMs (4,212 AUMs of which are competitive with livestock) for big game forage. This amount is sufficient to feed the expected big game numbers, which include 82 resident elk, 364 resident and 2,263 wintering mule deer, and 67 resident and 22 wintering antelope.
2. Reserve at least 40 percent (by weight) of the palatable vegetation and all unpalatable vegetation for general wildlife food and cover.
3. Exclude livestock grazing from 5,870 acres of unallotted areas for the benefit of wildlife and other values.
4. Restrict grazing management and season of grazing in the critical big game wintering areas.
5. Provide for further consideration of wintering deer in the Picabo Allotment through a wildlife Habitat Management Plan to be developed in 1980.

Watershed

The method of forage allocation used in determining the livestock grazing capacities will allow for 40 percent of the palatable vegetation and all of the unpalatable vegetation to remain ungrazed by livestock, which will contribute to watershed protection. Also, 2,492 acres of the unallotted areas will be protected specifically to rehabilitate critical erosion areas and to enhance riparian zones.

Wilderness

Full implementation of this rangeland management program may be delayed on approximately 160,000 acres, located in 10 allotments, pending completion of the wilderness review process in the area. Additional acreage is expected to be released after completing the wilderness intensive inventory in September, 1980. The remaining acreage, if any, will be identified as Wilderness Study Areas. Projects may be implemented in Wilderness Study Areas only if they do not impair wilderness suitability. Land treatments will be the most affected by this restriction. A more detailed description of constraints relating to the BLM wilderness review program is presented in the "Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands under Wilderness Review" published by BLM on December 12, 1979.

What It Will Do

The rangeland management program includes four major parts: (1) allocation of forage, (2) modification of grazing systems, (3) implementation of range improvements, and (4) protection of certain areas from livestock grazing. Implementing the program will have these environmental impacts:

Soil and Water

Soil erosion will be reduced approximately 6 percent in 15 years, from 1.00 to 0.94 acre feet/square mile/year. Localized short-term increases in erosion will result from range improvements, especially land treatments. Once seedings become established and native grasses increase, erosion will be reduced. Surface runoff will generally decline slightly as a result of improved management. Fencing of 1,600 acres of riparian areas will restore stream banks which are now subject to accelerated erosion. Watershed conditions on at least 2,492 acres of other unallotted areas will improve considerably.

Vegetation

Reduced livestock grazing will leave approximately 7,500,000 additional pounds of vegetation in place. Land treatments will restore or increase perennial forage plants on areas that are currently producing far below their natural potential. The overall vegetation condition will improve, and available forage will increase about 32 percent in 15 years.

Livestock Grazing

The livestock industry will experience an initial loss of 17,131 AUMs from public lands, based on present authorized use. However, through improved management systems, range improvements, and land treatment, 13,116 AUMs are expected to be regained within 15 years. This will result in a long-term deficit of 4,015 AUMs, which is less than expected under any of the individual alternatives considered in the ES. Forage quality improvement through management and land treatment will enhance allotments for grazing use.

Wildlife

Habitat for all classes of wildlife will improve in approximately 75 percent of the area. Assuming present animal management policies of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission remain the same, elk numbers are expected to increase almost 400 percent, resident deer 250 percent, wintering deer 65 percent, and antelope 150 percent. Upland birds are expected to increase 10 percent and waterfowl 5 percent. The fishery in the unit will be little affected.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources could be affected through implementation of the management decisions. Trampling, erosion, livestock trailing, and range improvements will affect certain sites. It is estimated that between 262 and 275 of 308 sites could be affected. This is a slight decrease from the present situation.

Visual Resources

Visual contrasts resulting from implementation of this livestock grazing program will be reduced slightly.

Wilderness

Wilderness values are protected by law and will not be impaired by the implementation of this program.

Socioeconomic Conditions

The economic effect on ranchers will probably be the most significant short-term adverse impact. Adjustments in stocking rates will cause direct income losses to the involved ranchers of between $343,000 and $478,000 annually. This represents a dollar loss of less than 1% of the total income of the seven-county economic area. In the long-term, this income loss will be reduced to between $80,000 and $122,000, based on expected restoration of AUMs following establishment of seedings and increased production due to better management. Between 40 and 61 jobs will be lost. The long-term economic impacts of the selected course of action will be less than for any individual alternative considered in the environmental impact statement.

THE ALTERNATIVES

The Rangeland Management Program was developed after careful consideration of the Proposed Action and each of the alternatives analyzed in the Shoshone Grazing Environmental Statement. This section summarizes each suggested treatment and gives the reasons for selecting or not selecting particular options as the bais for the decision for future management. The final decision-making utilized comments and suggestions obtained through the public participation process. For specifics refer to Tables 1, 2, and 3.

ES Proposed Action

Most of the Decision was obtained from the Proposed Action. The main exception was in the use of range improvements recommended by Alternative 4. The Proposed Action was adopted for the Decision largely because it is environmentally sound, cost effective and technically feasible. In addition, the Proposed Action closely follows legislative mandates.

Alternative 1 (No Change)

> This alternative would provide for livestock grazing to continue as at the present time.

The "No Change" Alternative was adopted entirely for one allotment and partly for nine others. The reasons for these adoptions are:

1. The one allotment that will be entirely unchanged will be combined with another allotment and analyzed with the Sun Valley Grazing Environmental Impact Statement in 1981.
2. Based on several years monitoring it was found that the stocking rate, grazing systems and/or periods of use were found to be proper for five allotments.
3. The period of use for one allotment will be maintained because of the expressed preference of the new permittee.
4. Changes in the stocking rate, the grazing systems or periods of use on some allotments will be postponed pending completions of wildlife habitat management plans, SCS–BLM cooperative ranch plans and a wilderness study area determination.

Alternative 1 was not selected for the rest of the allotments because present management was found to be causing undue range deterioration. Present management was also found to be falling short of accomplishing planning objectives.

Alternative 2 (Discontinue Livestock Grazing)

> This alternative would completely eliminate livestock grazing. The only new range improvements would be those which would enhance wildlife and/or watershed values.

This alternative was not selected for any of the allotments because its economic impact on livestock permittees would be too severe and it is also not consistent with BLM's direction originating in the Taylor Grazing Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act.

Alternative 3 (Lower Level Stocking)

> The initial stocking rate for this alternative would be 19,147 AUMs, which is approximately 50% of the stocking rate under the Proposed Action and approximately 36% of the current inventoried grazing capacity. Forage not used by livestock would be reserved for wildlife and watershed values. All other management considerations would be identical to the Proposed Action.

This alternative was not selected because there were no compelling environmental, social, political or economic reasons for its selection. Its economic impact on the livestock permittees would be severe. No facts have come to light through the inventory, planning or environmental assessment process that would favor the selection of this alternative for any allotment.

Alternative 4 (Maximum Rehabilitation)

> This alternative proposes extensive land treatments and other range improvements to maximize rangeland livestock values. Adjustments would be made in the grazing systems and seasons of use to accommodate the range improvements. The alternative recommends an increase of 2,305 AUMs over the Proposed Action stocking rate.

New range improvements are a significant part of the Rangeland Management Program Decision. Range improvements from Alternative 4 will be implemented on 24 of the 42 allotments. Four additional allotments will have new range improvements selected from other options. The reasons for these selections are:

1. The improvements would speed up the rate of rangeland recovery.
2. Nearly unanimous public response called for additional AUMs to those specified in the Proposed Action.
3. The Alternative also provide the opportunity to be responsive to the intent of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 and to the Idaho Congressional Delegation which had been instrumental in gaining passage of the Act.

Because of the requirements of the added range improvements, Alternative 4 was selected in its entirety for one allotment. In addition, modified stocking rates, grazing systems and/or periods of use were also selected from Alternative 4 – mostly in support of the added range improvements.

Alternative 5 (Modified Proposal)

Under this alternative the Proposed Action would be implemented on 37 of the 42 allotments. On the other five allotments, the grazing system, period of use, stocking rate and/or land treatments in the Proposed Action would be modified to reduce unmitigated impacts identified in the Environmental Statement.

This alternative was selected in its entirety for one of the five allotments above because it was the most economically, technically feasible and environmentally sound choice. Alternative 5 was not selected for the four remaining allotments because other options were found to be more appropriate.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Land Use Planning

In May of 1975 and again in May of 1976 meetings were held with governmental and public audiences to discuss the Management Framework Plan (MFP) recommendations for the area. The views expressed at those meetings were recorded and documented. In addition to the public meetings, letters containing maps and information were sent to various interested parties and agencies, requesting information or recommendations that might be incorporated into the MFPs. Resulting comments were taken into consideration, and the Magic, Bennett Hills, and Timmerman Hills MFPs were approved in 1975 and 1976, respectively.

Grazing System Development

Based on MFP recommendations, draft grazing systems were designed during 1976 and 1977. Approximately 62 meetings and numerous informal contacts were held between BLM personnel and individual users or user groups to explore the feasibility and compatibility of the proposed grazing systems to the users' requirements and future plans. Several related meetings were held in the Shoshone District Office to explain the environmental statement process and its significance. A field trip that included noted range experts and the Idaho Rangeland Committee was held August 4, 1977, at which time the local rangeland problems and suggested solutions were discussed.

Recommendations and comments for designing grazing systems were solicited from individuals and user groups and, although very limited in number, the responses reflected a good deal of interest and effort. All comments were considered, and recommendations were adopted if they were consistent with the management objectives. The Maximum Rehabilitation Alternative in the ES was, in part, a direct result of these various meetings and contacts.

ES Preparation

On March 16, 1978, a news release was distributed to the media throughout Idaho announcing the beginning of the Shoshone ES preparation, inviting further public involvement. At the same time, letters and explanatory material were sent to the affected livestock operators; wildlife, environmental, and livestock organizations; other Federal agencies, State and local agencies; and Congressional delegations inviting them to take part in the ES process by supplying information and comments.

Several individuals with special expertise were consulted prior to preparation of the Draft ES. Informal consultation was carried out between the BLM District Office and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The State Historic Preservation Officer was contacted regarding the proposal in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

ES Review

The draft ES was mailed to those individuals and groups expressing an interest in the ES. Additionally, copies were sent to Congressional delegations and state legislators, Federal agencies, State and local agencies and other institutions or groups seeking a wide distribution. Approximately 475 copies were distributed. A total of 46 comment letters were received, several of which represented many individuals.

A public meeting regarding the adequacy of the ES was held on August 7, 1979, at the Lincoln Elementary School in Shoshone, Idaho. Testimony was presented by 33 individuals.

Decision Process

All previous public comments and suggestions have been considered in developing this rangeland management program. During November, 1979, the permittees were invited to meetings to discuss the proposed grazing management and to offer comments or suggestions. Because of scheduling difficulties, a few contacts were made by telephone. During these meetings and telephone conversations, several final adjustments were made in grazing management proposals.

Normal day-to-day contact with users and other interested parties will continue as specific features of the rangeland component of the land use plan are refined and implemented. Prior to issuing formal decisions specifying the stocking rates and grazing systems, the District Grazing Advisory Board will be consulted to obtain its recommendations on the proposal for each allotment.

IMPLEMENTATION

Administrative Actions

The Shoshone District has begun meetings with the affected livestock users. Following these meetings, the District Manager will send proposed decisions to individual permittees, specifying the kind and number of livestock to be permitted, the period of use, and the type of grazing system for each allotment. The permittees may protest the proposed decisions. Following the 15-day protest period final decisions will be issued. These decisions are subject to administrative appeal by the permittees.

Range Improvements

A total of approximately 174 miles of fence, 40 miles of water pipelines, 83 reservoirs, 47 spring developments, 18 cattleguards, and 20 miles of stock trails are needed to implement the new grazing program. In addition, land treatments including 77,045 acres of seeding and/or sagebrush reduction by burning or spraying are included. All range improvements are scheduled to be completed within the next five years, beginning in 1980 and ending in 1984.

Specific location and/or design of each range improvement will be subject to a site-specific environmental assessment. Also, if wilderness study areas are identified through the BLM wilderness inventory process, some range improvement projects may be delayed, altered, or eliminated to conform with the wilderness interim management policy, pending a decision by Congress regarding wilderness designation.

Related Actions

This rangeland management program will be an integral part of the multiple use management that is identified in the land use plan. Almost all other resources will be directly or indirectly affected by the rangeland program. For example, adjustment of livestock management will accomplish several objectives for wildlife habitat improvement. Conversely, management of other resources, as defined in the land use plan and subject to funding and priority considerations, will be compatible with the rangeland program.

Grazing Use Adjustments

We want to move ahead with grazing use adjustments so range improvement can be implemented. Through consultation with users we will endeavor to obtain consensus as to amount of required reductions and voluntary non-use in order to be able to proceed with improvements. In case understandings cannot be reached, some range investments must be withheld until appropriate stocking levels can be assured to safeguard these investments.

If, after one or two years of monitoring, the studies indicate that allotment objectives can be met without implementing the full reductions, the decisions will be modified accordingly.

In areas of predominantly annual grass (cheatgrass) vegetation, adjustments will be made. However, if a seeding is scheduling in such areas but cannot be accomplished immediately, an interim allowance of temporary non-renewable grazing use, based on the cheatgrass, will be offered during the six-week period of optimum annual grass production (generally May 1 to June 15).

Future conversion of use from sheep to cattle (or vice versa) will be determined or allowed on the basis of future studies or the appropriate environmental analysis record (EAR). If studies and evaluation indicate the additional forage is consistently produced (over one or more cycles of the grazing systems), increases in authorized livestock grazing will be allocated if consistent with the long-term objectives of the plan.

Appropriations

Funding availability is a critical factor in implementing this rangement management program. Development of range improvements will begin in 1980 with approximately $200,000 of range betterment funds which have already been programmed.

Because future funding cannot be precisely predicted, this program is based on anticipated funding levels, but the rate of development will be subject to future appropriations.

Monitoring

Studies and evaluations will be conducted following implementation of each grazing system, to determine if specific objectives are being met. These studies typically will include compilation of actual use, range trend, range/watershed condition, utilization, weather data, carrying capacity, and wildlife habitat monitoring. Where specific objectives are not being met, adjustments will be made. Several of the unallotted areas will be used as study areas to determine how production, cover, and other conditions compare with the areas under grazing management.

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